(b) No export or import can be made by any person without an IEC number, updation of the existing list of IEC holders and on an annual basis thereafter will ensure that only genuine parties engaged in foreign trade obtain IEC. Any IEC holder can comply with this requirement on-line by filling up a simple format. Large number of exporters have already filed the return. However, the dead-line for filing of the returns has been extended from 31st July to 31st October this year at the request of some of the trade bodies.

China eyeing Indian diamond cutting industry

734. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian accounts for over 70 per cent of the global diamond cutting and polishing industry;

(b) whether it is a fact that China is eyeing that industry in view of cheap labour cost in China; and

(c) the action proposed to review labour policies, infrastructure bottlenecks, etc. threatening domestic diamond industry with labour problem with threat to relocate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) India is the largest cutting and polishing centre in the world. India's share in global cut and polished diamonds approximately is 60% in terms of value, 85% in terms of volume, 92% in terms of pieces. 11 out of 12 diamonds set in jewellery world-wide are cut and polished in India.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Review and updation of labour policy is a continuous process so as to ensure its relevance to the emerging needs. The labour policy to a large extent is governed by various labour laws aimed at protecting the interest of workers in terms of their health, social security, welfare, and safety within the frame of overall economic policy of the Government. In the recent years the Government initiated the process of Labour Reforms with a view to meeting the challenges of globalization. Accordingly, steps have been initiated to carry out amendments in some important labour laws with a view to maintaining their contemporariness.

The Indian diamond industry uses advanced technology to remain competitive.

Lichee export

†735. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of Lichee exported from India and the extent of foreign exchange earned thereby;

(b) whether Lichee is also exported from Uttaranchal;

(c) if so, whether the State Government is being provided with the assistance to increase the production of exportable Lichee in the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) The quantity and value of Lichee exported from India during the year 2002-03 (April to December) has been 33.61 MTs and Rs. 97.51 lakhs respectively.

(Source : DGC & IS)

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) An Agri Export Zone for Lichees has been set up in Uttaranchal. Under this, various schemes of the Government are dovetailed in the area. A comprehensive package of services including training, dissemination of technical knowledge on adoption of pre and post harvest practices by farmers etc. are being provided. Further, entrepreneurs are being encouraged to set up integrated packhouses for procuring of Lichees. Transport assistance is also being provided for undertaking exports.

Duty Entitlement Pass Book Scheme

736. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the objectives of the Duty Entitlement Pass Book Scheme (DEPB);

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.